

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claim 8 to read as shown below. The claims, as pending in the subject application, read as follows:

1 to 7. (Cancelled)

8. (Currently Amended) A laser oscillating apparatus comprising:
a laser tube comprising a pair of waveguides which are divided from each other by a plate member and are connected via a slit-shaped gap formed on the plate member along a lengthwise direction of the waveguide, and

a laser gas excited by electromagnetic waves supplied via the waveguides,
wherein the width of the slit-shaped gap is larger than the thickness of the plate member,

wherein plasma is in the slit-shaped gap, and

wherein laser light is generated by resonating light emitted from the plasma.

9. (Previously Presented) The laser oscillating apparatus according to claim 8, wherein an end of one of said pair of waveguides is offset from the other one of said pair of waveguides by a predetermined distance.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Previously Presented) The laser oscillating apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the laser gas is supplied in a flow direction from one of said pair of waveguides into the other of said pair of waveguides via the slit-shaped gap.

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Previously Presented) The laser oscillating apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the electromagnetic wave is a microwave.

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Previously Presented) The laser oscillating apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the laser gas is at least one inert gas selected from Kr, Ar, Ne and He or a gaseous mixture of the at least one inert gas and an F₂ gas.

16 to 18. (Cancelled)

19. (Previously Presented) An exposure apparatus comprising:
a laser oscillating apparatus comprising a laser tube comprising a pair of waveguides which are connected via a slit-shaped gap formed along a lengthwise direction of the waveguides, and a laser gas excited by electromagnetic waves supplied via the waveguides, said laser oscillating apparatus being a light source that emits illumination light;

a first optical unit that irradiates a reticle, where a predetermined pattern is formed, with the illumination light from said laser oscillating apparatus; and

a second optical unit that irradiates an irradiated surface with the illumination light via said reticle,

wherein the predetermined pattern on said reticle is projected on said irradiated surface upon exposure of the irradiated surface,

wherein the illumination light comprises laser light generated by resonating light emitted from plasma, and

wherein the plasma is generated in the slit-shaped gap.

20. (Previously Presented) A device fabrication method comprising:

a step of applying a photosensitive material to an irradiated surface;

a step of exposing the irradiated surface coated with the photosensitive material via a predetermined pattern by using an exposure apparatus comprising a laser oscillating apparatus as a light source that emits illumination light, a first optical unit that irradiates a reticle, having a predetermined pattern formed thereon, with the illumination light from said laser oscillating apparatus, and a second optical unit that irradiates the irradiated surface with the illumination light via said reticle, the laser oscillating apparatus comprising a laser tube comprising a pair of waveguides which are connected by a slit-shaped gap formed along a lengthwise direction of the waveguides and a laser gas excited by electromagnetic waves supplied via the waveguides; and

a step of developing the photosensitive material exposed via the predetermined pattern,

wherein the predetermined pattern on said reticle is projected on the irradiated surface upon exposure of the irradiated surface,

wherein the illumination light comprises laser light generated by resonating light emitted from plasma, and

wherein the plasma is generated in the slit-shaped gap.

21. (Cancelled)

22. (Previously Presented) The laser oscillating apparatus according to claim 9, wherein the predetermined distance is $1/4$ of a wavelength of the electromagnetic waves in the waveguide.

23. (Previously Presented) The laser oscillating apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the electromagnetic waves are supplied to one of the pair of waveguides into the other one of the pair of waveguides via the slit-shaped gap.

24. (Previously Presented) The laser oscillating apparatus according to claim 8, wherein standing waves are formed by supplying the electromagnetic waves into the pair of waveguides.

25. (Previously Presented) The laser oscillating apparatus according to claim 24, wherein a phase of the standing waves is shifted by $1/4$ of the wavelength of the supplied electromagnetic waves in the respective waveguides.